

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CPR-02 SS-20 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01

USIA-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 SSO-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LI

SUBJECT: LIBERIAN PARTY

1. POLICE WERE CALLED EARLY JULY 7 TO NEW CARROLTON, MARY-LAND HOME OF CHARLES SNETTER, SON OF LIBERIAN AMBASSADOR TO HAITI, WHERE PARTY BEING HELD FOR HIS MOTHER. POLICE REPORT ENTRY TO HOUSE BARRED BY GROUP OF LIBERIANS INCLUDING VARNEY E. DEMPSTER, PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD. STRUGGLE ENSUED DURING WHICH DEMPSTER ALLEGEDLY TRIED GRAB POLICEMAN'S HANDGUN. IN RESPONSE SUBSEQUENT POLICE RADIO DISTRESS CALL, SEVERAL DOZEN POLICE CARS AND A HELICOPTER RUSHED TO SCENE. THREE LIBERIANS INCLUDING DEMPSTER WERE TREATED AT HOSPITAL ALONG WITH SEVERAL POLICEMEN.

2. SIX LIBERIANS INCLUDING SNETTER AND DEMPSTER HAVE BEEN ARRESTED ON CHARGES STEMMING FROM INCIDENT. DEMPSTER IS CHARGED WITH ASSAULT WITH ATTEMPT TO COMMIT MURDER. DEMPSTER HAS BEEN RELEASED ON HIS OWN RECOGNIZANCE. OTHER
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LIBERIANS SEEKING FUNDS FOR BAIL, WHICH DEPT UNDERSTANDS
SET IN 1,000 DLS RANGE FOR EACH.

3. LIBERIAN EMBASSY CHARGE CLAIMS POLICE ATTACKED DEMPSTER
WITHOUT PROVOCATION. CHARGE, WHO WAS NOT PRESENT AT PARTY,
MAINTAINS LIBERIANS NOT GUILTY OF CHARGES MADE AGAINST THEM.
CHARGE INITIALLY CLAIMED DEMPSTER AND SNETTER, EACH OF WHOM
HAVE LIBERIAN DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS, WERE ENTITLED TO DIPLO-

MATIC IMMUNITY. DEPT HAS EXPLAINED THAT AS NEITHER
DEMPSTER NOR SNETTER'S FATHER IS ACCREDITED TO USG, NEITHER
HAS SUCH IMMUNITY.

4. DEPT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL'S
OFFICE HAS REQUESTED CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO REDUCING OR
DROPPING CHARGES AGAINST LIBERIANS IN VIEW CLOSE BILATERAL
TIES, RECENT UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT INVOLVING MRS. TOLBERT,
AND POSSIBILITY THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME OVERREACTION BY
POLICE.

5. PRECEDING FOR YOUR BACKGROUND IN CASE INCIDENT RAISED
BY GOL. DEPT EXPECTS TO HEAR FURTHER FROM LIBERIAN
EMBASSY. WASHINGTON POST DESCRIBED INCIDENT IN FULL
COLUMN BACKPAGE ARTICLE JULY 8. LOCAL TELEVISION AND
RADIO ALSO REPORTING. WIRE SERVICES PROBABLY ALSO HAVE
STORY. SISCO

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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